

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15 COME-00 EB-07

LAB-04 SIL-01 AID-05 A-01 OPR-02 SY-05 ISO-00 /090 W

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R 030900Z AUG 76

FM AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4940

INFO AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMCONSUL DURBAN

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMEMBASSY MASERU

AMEMBASSY MBABANE

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

UNCLAS JOHANNESBURG 1279

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, SF

SUBJECT: MINERS STRIKE AVERTED

REF: JOHANNESBURG 1263

1. FOLLOWING ALL DAY MEETINGS AUGUST 2 HELD BY SAG LABOR  
MINISTER BOTHA WITH OFFICIALS OF CHAMBER OF MINES AND  
OF MINE WORKERS UNION, THREATENED STRIKE OF MINERS WAS  
AVERTED BY AGREEMENT OF ALL PARTIES TO ESTABLISHMENT  
OF COMMISSION TO STUDY ALL ASPECTS OF FIVE-DAY WEEK  
IN MINING INDUSTRY. IN PRESS STATEMENT ISSUED AT TEND  
OF DAY, BOTHA SAID COMMISSION WOULD BE APPOINTED AS  
SOON AS POSSIBLE AND WOULD BE REQUIRED TO PRODUCE  
INTERIM REPORT WITHIN SIX MONTHS AND FINAL REPORT AFTER  
A YEAR. BOTHA STATED "BECAUSE IT IS SO IMPORTANT FOR  
SOUTH AFRICA THAT NO WRONG STEPS BE TAKEN AT THIS TIME,  
I ASKED BOTH PARTIES TO WAIT FOR THE REPORT AND  
RECOMMENDATIONS."

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2. THE MINE WORKERS UNION (MWU) AGREED TO AVOID STRIKE ACTION AT LEAST UNTIL THE COMMISSION'S FINDINGS BECAME KNOWN. IN THE MEANTIME, THE MWU AND CHAMBER OF MINES AGREED TO RECOMMENCE DISCUSSIONS HOPEFULLY LEADING TO SATISFACTORY SOLUTION.

3. BOTHA SAID IN STATEMENT THAT A LOSS OF MINING PRODUCTION AT THIS POINT WOULD HAVE SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES FOR NATIONAL PRODUCTIVITY:

"I TOLD BOTH PARTIES THAT THE IMPLICATIONS OF A STRIKE WOULD BE MOST SERIOUS, AND THAT THE GOVERNMENT MUST BE MADE ACQUAINTED WITH THE FULL IMPLICATIONS A FIVE-DAY WORKING WEEK WOULD HAVE ON THE MINING INDUSTRY.

" THE MINING INDUSTRY HAS ALWAYS BEEN A STRONG STABILISING FACTOR IN A STRONG SOUTH AFRICA. IT WILL HAVE TO PLAY AN EVEN GREATER ROLE IN THE NECESSARY FUTURE ECONOMIC GROWTH IF WE ARE TO ACT FROM A POSITION OF POWER IN A DIFFICULT WORLD, AND IF WE ARE TO ENSURE PROGRESS AND HAPPINESS FOR ALL THE PEOPLES OF THIS COUNTRY."

4. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH THE SETTLEMENT WAS AGREED TO BY ALL SIDES AND KEEPS PEACE TEMPORARILY IN THE MINING INDUSTRY, ONE TAGGED AS BIGGEST LOSER IN YESTERDAY'S DECISION IS LIKELY TO BE MWU LEADER ARRIE PAULUS. IT WOULD SEEM FROM THE SIZE OF THE STRIKE VOTE (SEE REFTEL) THAT HIS MEMBERSHIP WAS FIRMLY COMMITTED TO THE DEMAND FOR A FIVE-DAY WORK WEEK NOW.

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